service providers. After the formation of BSNL in October, 2000, the service providing functions of Government in rural areas are being performed by BSNL.

(b) A detailed study was conducted by the Government in 1999 to choose the appropriate technology for rural telecom service and Village Public Telephones (VPTs). As a result of this study, WLL (Wireless in Local Loop) was chosen as a technology having comparatively low running cost, easy maintenance, reliable service etc. This technology is being increasingly used by BSNL for providing lines in rural areas. All service providers are free to choose any technology for deployment in rural, urban and semi-urban areas.

(c) Rural teledensity increased from 0.41% to 1.2% during the Ninth Plan period. Rural teledensity has reached 1.49% as on 30-06-2003. In 2002-2003, BSNL has provided 22.55 lakh DELs in rural areas. BSNL has planned about 8.6 lakh rural DELs during 2003-04. In addition 5,16,182 villages have been provided VPTs.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Tackling of economic crimes by CBI

2543. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY :

DR.M.N. DAS:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the CBI has set up Economic Intelligence Wing to tackle the growing menace of economic crimes in India;

(b) whether this wing represents Senior Officials of the Reserve Bank of India, some CBI officers of the Dy. Inspector General rank in probing Economic Offences in the country;

(c) if so, what would be the main tasks, power and functions of this wing;

(d) to what extent it would help to check the economic offenders; and

(e) whether any report would be submitted to Government from time to time?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION, MINISTRY OF PLANNING, DEPARTMENT OF SPACE. DEPARTMENT OF ATOMIC ENERGY AND

MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI SATYABRATA MOOKHERJEE): (a) to (e) The CBI has internally set up an Economic Intelligence Cell recently, under its Economic Offences Wing, Delhi region by assigning additional responsibilities to a team consisting of a Deputy Inspector General, a Superintendent of Police and a General Manager, Reserve Bank of India.

This Cell would help pursue a holistic approach in the investigation of economic crimes by studying trends, creating a database on various related aspects and disseminating information on economic crimes to the branches of the Wing. No special power has been conferred on this Cell and its activities, requiring attention of the Government, would figure in the CBI's monthly report.

Condition of ARIs in Karnataka

2544. SHRI M.V. RAJASEKHARAN :
DR. VIJAY MALLYA :

Will the Minister of AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that the condition of traditional rural and cottage industries has been deteriorating and are on the verge of closure especially in Karnataka;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to improve their condition and the extent to which Government have succeeded in improving the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES (SHRI SANGH PRIYA GAUTAM): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The Khadi and Village Industries sector consists essentially of conventional (traditional) rural cottage industries. Government has been taking steps from time to time for the promotion and development of rural and cottage industries throughout the country including Karnataka, with positive results. Assistance provided to this sector consists of margin money assistance under Rural Employment Generation Programme (REGP), training, technological and marketing support. In order to further strengthen this sector in the country, the Government on 14-05-2001